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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7539
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1516
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1268
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5528
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1909
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2006

In Today's Papers

Erdogan on Iraq, Syria, Iran

Sabah reports Prime Minister Erdogan said in an exclusive interview with the London-based Arabic Al-Hayat daily that despite a parliamentary decision in 2003, Turkey declined to send troops into Iraq due to the Iraqis' opposition to Turks' presence in their country. Erdogan remarked that despite the coalition forces' efforts, terror has been rising in Iraq. "We went to Lebanon on an invitation. What we are concerned about in Iraq is the situation in Kirkuk," Erdogan said. He stressed that when approaching Syria, the key notion should be "contact" instead of "isolation." On Iran, Erdogan pledged Turkey was ready to do all it can to see a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis. The PM also noted that Turkey was a "secular republic" where religion has been separated from politics.

General Jones Calls on Turkey to Extend Operations out of Kabul
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report the supreme NATO commander General James Jones has asked 26 member countries including Turkey to extend operations against Taliban forces out the capital Kabul. General Jones asked Turkey to help in NATO duties in other areas of the country. On Wednesday, Milliyet reported from Washington that General Jones said Turkish authorities had been notified about the request. "Turkish companies dominate Afghanistan. They did a very good job in building the US Embassy in Kabul. The ISAF had Turkish commanders. Turkey has an enormous capacity to make a difference in Afghanistan," General Jones said, stressing that Afghanistan was not a problem for Turkey, but "for all of us."

Kurds to Open New Oil Refineries in Iraq; Appoint PKK Envoy

Cumhuriyet reports the regional Kurdish administration in northern Iraq is planning to establish 10 new oil refineries in the region in an effort to end their dependency on diesel and other oil products coming from Turkey. The opening of new refineries will also strengthen the Kurdish administration's independence from Baghdad

regarding the use of natural resources, according to Cumhuriyet.

Additionally, Citing Kurdish website firatnews.com, Yeni Safak reports the leader of the regional Kurdish administration, Massoud Barzani, has appointed 'interior minister' Kerim Singari as the Kurdish envoy for countering the PKK.

Iraqi PM Due to Visit Turkey

Sabah reports the Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki said he will visit Turkey after the Ramadan holiday. An earlier visit scheduled for October 15 had been cancelled due to a sandstorm at Baghdad airport.

Diplomatic sources believe that by visiting Turkey, al-Maliki intends to end speculation that it was President Jalal Talabani who kept the Iraqi PM from paying a state visit to its neighbor.

Editorial Commentary on Iraq

Turgut Tarhanli argues in the liberal-intellectual Radikal that a "loose federation" may be a possible solution for Iraq but that in order for that formula to succeed a foreign "balancing" power, not occupation force is necessary: "There are several suggestions as to how to end the chaos in Iraq. However it is not realistic to make an analysis of the future of Iraq without taking into account the fact that the current chaotic situation merely stems from the occupation by foreign troops. Unlike the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are strong traces of the occupation in the nature of the religious and ethnic clashes in Iraq. At this point, can we really see a 'loose federation for Iraq' as a viable option? Iraq lacks the internal dynamics which would allow it to reach a consensus among the different groups, and this again stems from the fact that it is an occupied country. Given the circumstances, Iraq might be in need of a foreign power to play a balancing role, and the US can do that. The realization of this goal by the US remains

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a big question mark. There is no way to be certain that the US can achieve this goal given its ongoing invader identity. "

Mustafa Balbay points out that the situation in Iraq is likely to get worse as sectarian violence increases: "When the President of the United States accepted the fact that Iraq resembles Vietnam, he depicted the current picture of this country. Even though Bush later did not accept the way his remarks were interpreted, that does not change the reality in Iraq. It seems the US and the UK duo made plans for everything before invading Iraq but made an oversight when they ignored the people of Iraq. Currently resistance against the invaders is rising every day. In the days ahead there will certainly be more stories about the resistance in Iraq because the possibility of their winning has become more likely. On the other hand, as President Bush said in election campaigning remarks, there will be no immediate withdrawal from Iraq because of a sectarian war. One wonders who provided the ground for a sectarian war. That was the US, wasn't it? All of this leads to the fact that the US is on the way toward an even worse situation in Iraq which will create a very negative impact not only for the US but for the entire region."

Turks Used Greek Soldiers as 'Guinea Pigs' in 1984

Sabah, Milliyet and Zaman cite an Agence France-Presse (AFP) story saying a September report by the Virginia-based International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA) claims the Greek and Greek Cypriot soldiers captured during Turkey's 1974 military intervention in Cyprus had been used as "guinea pigs" in "secret Turkish army biochemistry laboratories" from 1984-88. ISSA chairman Greg Copley said the report's references have been "some, including from Turkey, who have been doing field work" and some Kurds working in the Turkish army laboratories.

Moderate Earthquakes Strike Turkey

All papers reported a magnitude 5.2 earthquake struck the Gemlik Bay about 155 miles south of Istanbul on Tuesday. On Friday, an earthquake of magnitude 5.0 shook the western city of Balikesir 250 miles south of Istanbul. In 1999, two devastating earthquakes hit northwestern Turkey, killing some 18,000 people. Papers quote some experts as saying the recent earthquakes should not be seen as indicators of stronger jolts for Istanbul, and some others as

warning that a stronger one might be coming for the north and south of Marmara Sea, which would have devastating effects on Istanbul.

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) President Rene van der Linden has arrived in Istanbul on Wednesday to meet with Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul.
- Prime Minister Erdogan has decided to extend his Ramadan holiday rest in the coastal tourist resort of Marmaris until the weekend.
- A total of 105 people have been killed in traffic accidents within five days during the Ramadan Holiday in Turkey.
- The Turkish Red Crescent has sent YTL 105 million in humanitarian aid to 34 countries over the last two years.
- IMF has issued warnings about the increasing inflation, gaping current deficit and unfavorable international conjuncture for Turkey.

International News

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- Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres said if he is named the new Israeli president he could free Marwan Barghouthi, the imprisoned leader of al-Fatah.
- Secretary Rice is urging the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Iran immediately for Tehran's defiance regarding the nation's nuclear program.
- The war in Iraq has become a major issue in the November 7 Congressional elections in the US.
- The Financial Times said Germany has turned its military into an international intervention force after a radical restructuring of its military since 1945.

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